

F-6-18

1797, 1822

Graceham Moravian Church and Parsonage
8231-A Rocky Ridge Road (MD 77)
Thurmont
Private

Graceham Moravian Church, now covered with white stucco because of deteriorated masonry, is a 2-story church, built in 1822 of local brick laid in Flemish bond. The three-bay long church was built as an addition of about the same size to the eastern gabled end at the rear of the four-bay long meeting house and parsonage of 1797. The older section, with a watertable on the north, west, and south sides, has 2/2 sash windows on either floor, and is three bays wide on its west gable end, which has an interior brick chimney flanked by 6-light casement windows in the attic gable. The entrance to this portion of the building is in the center bay of this facade, sheltered by a one-bay hip-roofed porch, and consists of a single door with rounded two-panel sidelights and a transom. This portion of the building originally had an open first-floor porch across the north facade, which was enclosed in 1870. The early-19th century portion of the church is slightly higher than the first, with a large hexagonal cupola with a domed roof in the first bay east of the junction, approximately in the center of the combined building. This is apparently a replica of the original bell tower. The first bay to the east on the south facade holds an entrance recessed into the wall and defined by fluted wood columns and an arch. The entry is double leafed with a two-paned transom above. Above the transom is a round-arched window. In the three bays on the north facade are pairs of narrow 2/2 sash tinted windows, each pair topped by a round-arched window. The bays are separated by pilasters.

The foundation and watertable are continued across the sanctuary. A two-story addition was added to the south facade in the 1990s. About 300-400 yards to the north of the church is God's Acre, the Moravian graveyard. East of the church is a springhouse. The parsonage, three by four bays deep and approximately 35' by 37'-6", was built on the site of two previous log church buildings. Incorporated as part of the parsonage's stone foundation is that from the earliest log structure of 1749. Much of the original molding and hardware remains, and under the carpet is very wide hemlock planking. There is structural evidence of a bell tower at the eastern end of the house. No ridge pole was used, but rough hewn rafters were pinned together and reinforced with wind braces. During the 1870s, both the parsonage and church were altered to some degree, including replacement of windows, and addition of porches.

The Moravian Church or United Brethren was founded in 1457 in Bohemia by a group who wished to preserve the spirit of the teachings of the martyr John Huss. Soon after, the Brethren were persecuted and driven out of Bohemia and Moravia. Only a few remained at the end of the Thirty Years War (1648), and it was not until 1722 that the renewed church emerged under the patronage of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf in Saxony. Moravians came to America for missionary purposes and established planned, church-owned communities. The first permanent settlements (c. 1740) were in Pennsylvania. During the 1740s, two Moravian missionaries, George Ninke and his wife, arrived in Maryland. By 1753, some of the Brethren had traveled south to Salem, North Carolina. The congregation at Graceham was one of the groups who moved southward in

about the mid 18th century as part of a migration movement from Pennsylvania to Virginia and Carolina. This movement traveled via an Indian road passing near Monocacy, which is thought to have been a small village near what is now Creagerstown, Maryland. Moravians, under the leadership of Rev. George Ninke and Lorenz Nyberg, formed the settlement at Graceham in 1746. Built in 1797, the parsonage was, and still is, the headquarters of the parish and the community's center. It served as the church, the community kitchen, and a residence. These two connected buildings at Graceham, the parsonage and the church addition of 1822, are fine examples of American Moravian architecture. This building and the church's cemetery having uniform flat gravestones (called God's Acre by the Moravians) represents Maryland's only remaining Moravian 18th century settlement.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Graceham Moravian Church and Parsonage

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Md. Rt. 77 two miles east of Thurmont,
Rt. 2 - Box G-13

CITY, TOWN

Thurmont

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Frederick

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☒ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Congregation of the Graceham Moravian Church

STREET & NUMBER

State Route 77

CITY, TOWN

Graceham

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Frederick County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Frederick

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

F-6-18

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Graceham Moravian Church is located southeast of Thurmont, Maryland, on Maryland Route 77 about 800 feet east of Graceham Road. Now covered with white stucco because of deteriorated masonry, this small church, built in 1822 of local brick laid in Flemish bond, was consecrated on October 22 of that year. The three-bay church was built as an addition of about the same size to the eastern gabled end at the rear of the 2-1/2 story meeting house and parsonage in 1797. About 300-400 yards to the north of the church is God's Acre, the Moravian graveyard. East of the church is a springhouse.

The parsonage, three by four bays deep and approximately 35 feet by 37 feet 6 inches, was built on the site of two previous log church buildings. Incorporated as part of the parsonage's stone foundation is that from the earliest log structure of 1749. Much of the original molding and hardware remains, and under the carpet is very wide hemlock planking. There is structural evidence of a bell tower at the eastern end of the house. No ridge pole was used, but rough hewn rafters were pinned together and reinforced with wind braces.

During the 1870's, both the parsonage and the church were altered to some degree. The windows of the parsonage were replaced with 2/2 lights, and a one-story porch was added to the main entrance in the western gabled facade. There were, however, few changes in the basic floor plan. The interior chimney of the western gable is arched so as to permit two fireplaces on the first floor and a central hallway running from west to east at both levels. The first floor originally had two large rooms. The northern one with its cooking fireplace and bake oven was the community kitchen and dining hall for the pastor and guests; the southern room was the "Saal" used for community worship and meetings as well as a schoolroom. There was a door in the northeastern corner (facing north) and it is believed that an original stair leading to the pastor's rooms stood in the same corner where there is one now.

There have also been alterations to the church itself, but the form and proportions characteristic of American Moravian architecture have been retained. For the congregation's centennial anniversary in 1858, the arched plaster ceiling was frescoed by Mr. Tetherly of Frederick, Maryland. Painted pilasters decorated the walls. However, during the early twentieth century the roof leaked, and curved tongue and groove boards with a natural finish were installed to cover over the damaged ceiling. In addition, the walls have been painted white.

Originally, there were three entrances to the sanctuary, one in each of the center bays of the northern and southern elevations and an interior door from the parsonage at the rear (western) end of the church. Since the aisles formed a cross, there were four sections of pews which enabled members to be seated according to custom, i.e., single sister, married brethern, etc. A simple altar at the eastern

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THE GRACEHAM MORAVIAN CHURCH AND PARSONAGE
Frederick County

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DESCRIPTION, continued

end was either a raised ellipse or a semicircle having one level with three chairs behind a communion table. About 1870, the northern door was closed and the southern one moved to the western bay. This new entrance with double doors has a large, arched transom and fluted pilasters extending to the impost of the circular opening and then extended to support a simple cornice. The configuration of the pews and altar was reversed since the seating became semicircular in plan and the present railed altar rectangular.

Four trusses made of twenty inch square chestnut members support the church's pinned roof and bell tower. The present tower, built in 1960, almost duplicates the original. Resting on a clapboard octagonal base, the circular tower has decorative Gothic elements. Beneath a domical roof are multifoil arches with elliptical cusps. Old photographs show the bell tower with louvred shutters and a spike on top instead of the new Latin cross.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

American eighteenth and early nineteenth century expansion and settlements.

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Moravian Church or United Brethren was founded in 1457 in Bohemia by a group who wished to preserve the spirit of the teachings of the martyr John Huss. Soon after, the Brethren were persecuted and driven out of Bohemia and Moravia. Only a few remained at the end of the Thirty Years' War (1648), and it was not until 1722 that the renewed church emerged under the patronage of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf in Saxony.

Moravians came to America for missionary purposes and established planned, church-owned communities. The first permanent settlements (c. 1740) were in Pennsylvania (Bethlehem, Nazareth, Lititz, etc.). During the 1740's, two Moravian missionaries, George Nieke and his wife, had arrived in Maryland. By 1753, some of the Brethren had traveled south to Salem, North Carolina. The congregation at Graceham was one of the groups who moved southward during the mid-eighteenth century as part of a migration movement from Pennsylvania to Virginia and Carolina. These people traveled via an Indian road passing near Monocacy, which is thought to have been a small village near what is now Creagerstown, Maryland.

By 1745, the Luthern Log Church of the Monocacy had been established for about ten years. When their pastor died, a Lutheran minister from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, sent a Moravian layreader and schoolteacher for the then combined Lutheran and German Reformed congregations. However, the establishment of a separate Moravian Church was the result of a theological disagreement between Count Zinzendorf, who wanted one German protestant denomination in America, and Reverend Heinrich Melchor Muhlenberg, who became the leader of all Lutheran groups in the colonies. When, on a visit, he discovered that the Moravian missionaries had influenced some of the Lutherans, Reverend Muhlenberg was instrumental in having the Brethren locked out of the Log Church in 1746. Because of this development, a sympathizer, "old Mr. Ambrose", offered his house to the Brethren for a school and meetings.

Moravians, under the leadership of Reverend George Nieke and Lorenz Nyberg, formed the settlement at Graceham in 1746. With the help of Jacob Weller, Daniel Dulany the Elder of Annapolis had been petitioned for a land grant; and, during 1746-47, he donated ten acres

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SIGNIFICANCE, continued

of his land in the Monocacy Valley to the Moravians for a church and schoolhouse. At the southwest end of this tract, the first Moravian log building was erected in 1749. On the first floor was the schoolroom; the second provided a chapel. The Brethren known as "the Congregation in Monocacy" were regularly organized on October 8, 1758. By 1772, the schoolhouse and church had become too small for the 150 Moravians, and a new meetinghall was added to a gabled end of the first building. This addition, about 32 by 36 feet, was made of four-inch thick plank walls finished with lath and plaster inside.

The Moravian settlers purchased thirty more acres of woodland in 1781, and the wood supply utilized for fence rails and fuel, lasted until 1820,25. On this land a village was laid off in 1782; and, three houses having been erected by 1785, it was named Graceham by church authorities.

Graceham, as all Moravian settlements, was an exclusive church-owned community, and it remained so until about 1815-19. The church refunded the members who had purchased the thirty acres in 1781 and then leased lots to the congregation for one penny per square rod. By 1808, there were houses on both sides of Graceham's main street as well as a two-story brick tavern at the upper end of the village. A request to rent houses to non-members in 1815 was made and granted, and by 1819 ground rents ceased since householders could then purchase their lots from the congregation.

The Graceham Moravian settlement was never large, so there was little need for the highly developed skills in town planning, possessed by the Brethern. Because it was always a rural village, the necessary buildings, such as the "Gemeinhaus" (community house), boys' and girls' schools, the widow's house, etc., found in large towns, were not needed at Graceham.

Graceham, the only Moravian settlement in Maryland, combined from its beginning the essential services provided by all these buildings into one structure, now called the parsonage. Built in 1797, it was, and still is, the headquarters of the parish and the community's center. It served as the church, the community kitchen and a residence. There was another Moravian village a few miles south of Frederick on Carroll's Manor. A log structure, built in 1768, was leased to that congregation by the Graceham church for one rose per year. However, when nearly all the members moved to Hope, North Carolina (part of the Wachovia tract), that church ceased to exist by 1785.

These two connected buildings at Graceham, the parsonage and the church addition of 1822, and fine examples of American Moravian architecture. The church, parsonage and God's Acre (the Moravian cemetery) with its flat gravestones, represent Maryland's only remaining eighteenth century Moravian settlement.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jones, Reverend Franklin C., II. Graceham Moravian Church, Route 2,
Box G-13, Thurmont, Maryland
Oerter, A. E. History of Graceham. 1901
Williams, T.J.C. and McKinsey, Folger. History of Frederick County,
Maryland, v.I. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1967.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 15 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

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B

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George J. Andreve

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

DATE

5/8/75

TELEPHONE

(301) 267-1438

STATE

Maryland 21401

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

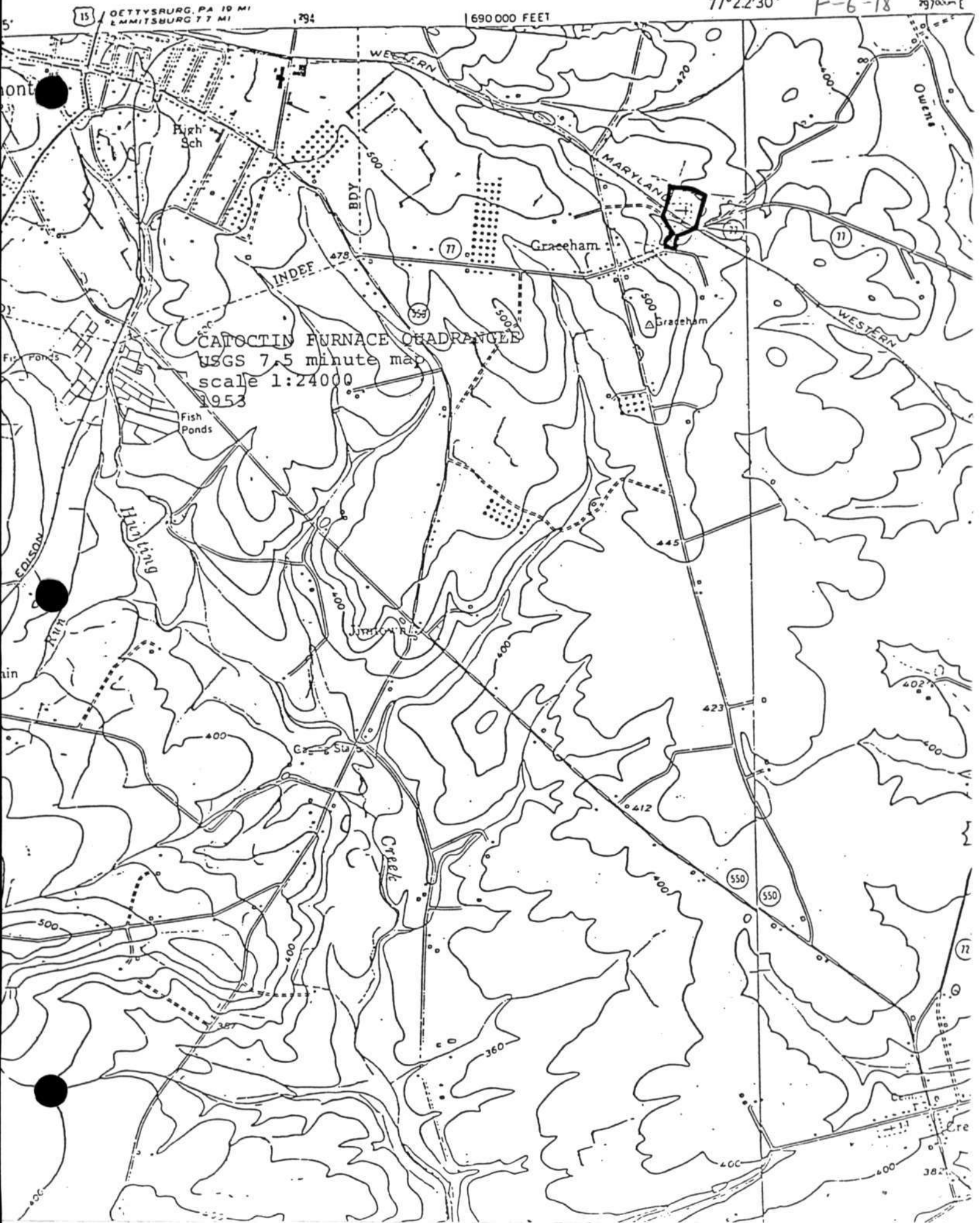
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



F-6-018

Graceham Moravian Church

8231 Rocky Ridge Road (MD 77), Thurmont

Jennifer K. Cosham, 25 April 2006



West façade



Southwest elevation

F-6-018

Graceham Moravian Church

8231 Rocky Ridge Road (MD 77), Thurmont

Jennifer K. Cosham, 25 April 2006



South elevation (new south wing)



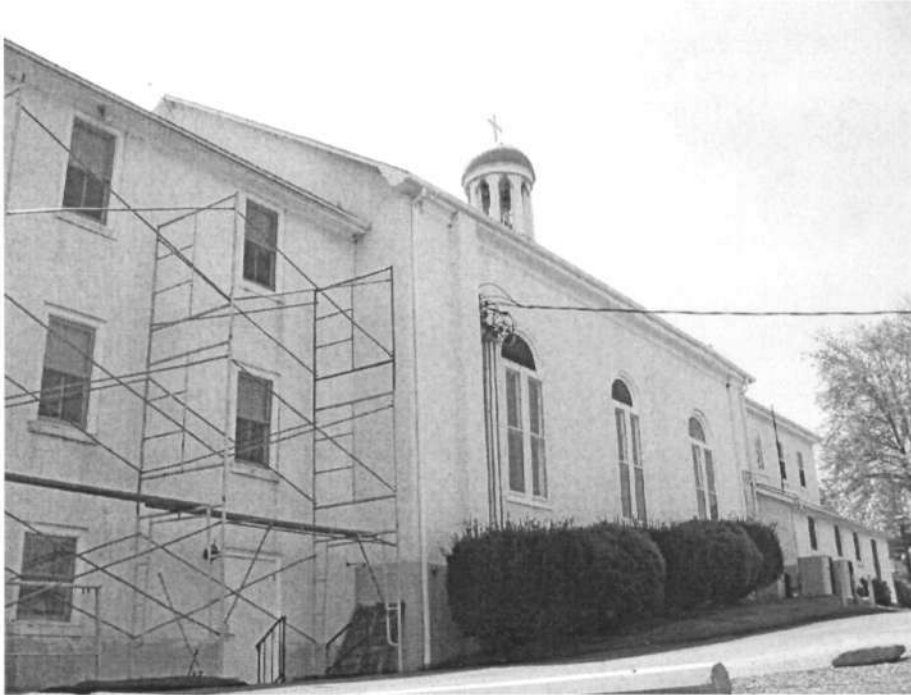
East gable end

F-6-018

Graceham Moravian Church

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North façade



Northwest elevation

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Graceham Moravian Church

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South side cornice under repair



South side cornice under repair

F-6-018

Graceham Moravian Church

8231 Rocky Ridge Road (MD 77), Thurmont

Jennifer K. Cosham, 25 April 2006



Springhouse, south façade



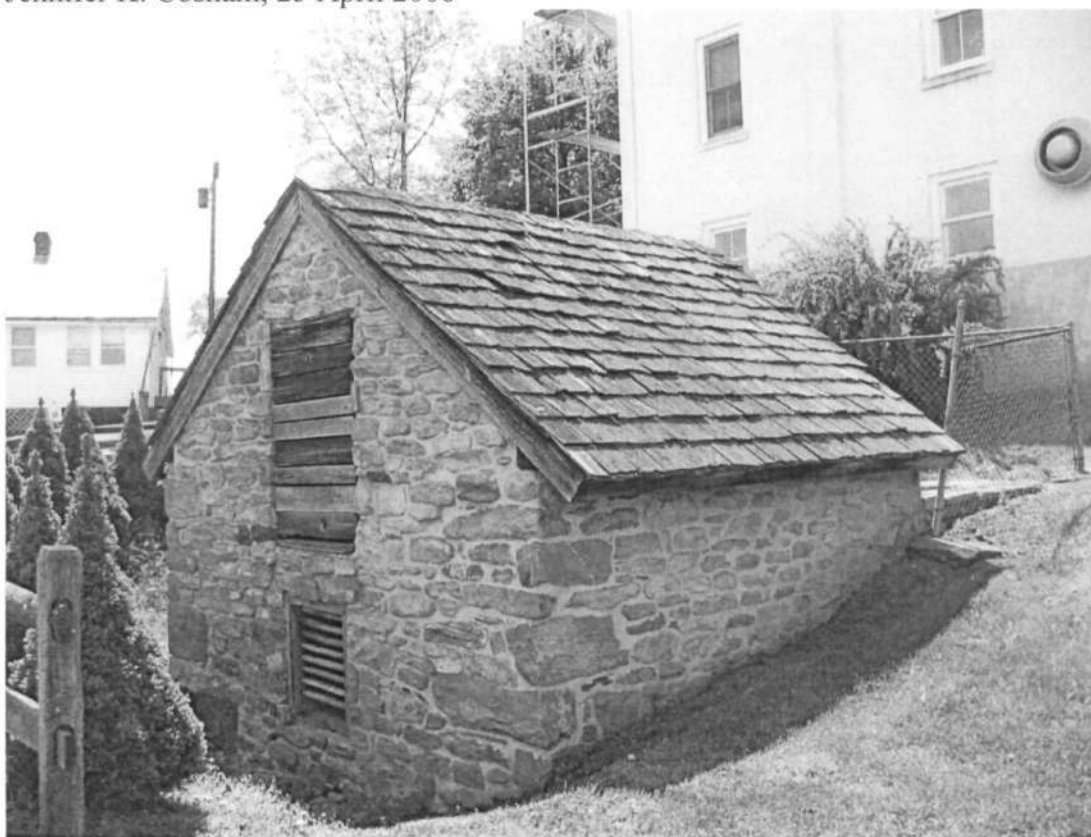
Springhouse, south and west facades

F-6-018

Graceham Moravian Church

8231 Rocky Ridge Road (MD 77), Thurmont

Jennifer K. Cosham, 25 April 2006



Springhouse, north and east facades

F-6-18
Graceham Moravian Church and Parsonage
8231-A Rocky Ridge Road (MD 77)
Thurmont





GRACEHAM MORAVIAN CHURCH AND PARSONAGE

F-6-18

2/75

SOUTHERN ELEVATION

B. S.



GRACEHAM MORAVIAN CHURCH AND PARSONAGE

F-6-18

2/75

CHURCH INTERIOR

CS